

DBC Book Club

Selected Books January – June, 2024

January 10

The Victory Garden: A Novel, Rhys Bowen (Carol)

As the Great War continues to take its toll in England, headstrong twenty-one-year-old Emily Bryce is determined to contribute to the war effort. She is convinced by a cheeky and handsome Australian pilot that she can do more, and before long she falls in love with him and accepts his proposal of marriage.

When he is sent back to the front, Emily volunteers as a “land girl,” tending to the neglected grounds of a large Devonshire estate. It’s here that Emily discovers the long-forgotten journals of a medicine woman who devoted her life to her herbal garden. The journals inspire Emily, and in the wake of devastating news, they are her saving grace. As Emily learns more about the volatile power of healing with herbs, the journals will bring her to the brink of disaster, but may open a path to her destiny.

February 7 (note: date change due to Valentine’s Day)

The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo: A Novel, Tracy Jenkins Reid (Chris)

From the author of *Daisy Jones & the Six* comes the story of aging and reclusive Hollywood movie icon Evelyn Hugo who is finally ready to tell the truth about her glamorous and scandalous life. But when she chooses unknown reporter Monique Grant for the job, no one is more astounded than Monique herself. Why her? Why now? Monique is not exactly on top of the world. Her husband has left her, and her professional life is going nowhere. Regardless of why Evelyn has selected her to write her biography, Monique is determined to use this opportunity to jumpstart her career.

Summoned to Evelyn’s luxurious apartment, Monique listens in fascination as the actress tells her story. From making her way to Los Angeles in the 1950s to her decision to leave show business in the ‘80s, and, of course, the seven husbands along the way, Evelyn unspools a tale of ruthless ambition, unexpected friendship, and a great forbidden love. Monique begins to feel a very real connection to the legendary star, but as Evelyn’s story near its conclusion, it becomes clear that her life intersects with Monique’s own in tragic and irreversible ways.

March 13

The Personal Librarian, Marie Benedict (Robin S.)

A remarkable novel about J. P. Morgan’s personal librarian, Belle da Costa Greene, the Black American woman who was hired by J. P. Morgan to curate a collection of rare manuscripts, books, and artwork for his newly built Pierpont Morgan Library. Belle becomes a fixture in New York City society and one of the most powerful people in the art and book world, known for her impeccable taste and shrewd negotiating for critical works as she helps create a world-class collection.

But Belle has a secret, one she must protect at all costs. She was born not Belle da Costa Greene but Belle Marion Greener. She is the daughter of Richard Greener, the first Black graduate of Harvard and a well-known advocate for equality. Belle’s complexion isn’t dark because of her alleged Portuguese heritage that lets her pass as white—her complexion is dark because she is African American. This is the story of an extraordinary woman, famous for her intellect, style, and wit, and recounts the lengths she must go to—for the protection of her family and her legacy—to preserve her carefully crafted white identity in the racist world in which she lives.

April 10

American Dirt: A Novel, Jeanine Cummins (Dorothy, Carol)

Lydia lives in Acapulco. She has a son, Luca, the love of her life, and a wonderful husband who is a journalist. And while cracks are beginning to show in Acapulco because of the cartels, Lydia's life is fairly comfortable. But after her husband's tell-all profile of the newest drug lord is published, none of their lives will ever be the same.

Forced to flee, Lydia and Luca find themselves joining the countless people trying to reach the United States. Lydia soon sees that everyone is running from something. But what exactly are they running to?

May 8

My Cousin Rachel, Daphne du Maurier (Linda)

Orphaned at an early age, Philip Ashley is raised by his older cousin, Ambrose. Resolutely single, Ambrose delights in Philip as his heir, and Philip grows to love Ambrose's grand estate as much as he does. But the world the two construct is shattered when Ambrose travels to Florence, where he falls in love and marries a mysterious distant cousin named Rachel. And there he dies suddenly.

Jealous of his marriage, racked by suspicion at the hints in Ambrose's letters, and grief-stricken by his death, Philip prepares to meet his cousin's widow with hatred in his heart. But when she arrives at the estate, Rachel seems to be a different woman from the one described in Ambrose's letters. Beautiful, sophisticated, and magnetic, Philip cannot help but feel drawn to Rachel. And yet, questions linger: did she have had a hand in Ambrose's death? And how, exactly, did he die? As Philip pursues the answers to these questions, he realizes that his own fate could hang in the balance.

June 12

All That Is Mine I Carry With Me: A Novel, William Landay (Sharon G.)

One afternoon in November 1975, ten-year-old Miranda Larkin comes home from school to find her house eerily quiet. Her mother is missing. Nothing else is out of place. There is no sign of struggle. Her mom's pocketbook remains in the front hall, in its usual spot. And so begins a mystery that will span a lifetime. What happened to Jane Larkin?

Investigators suspect Jane's husband. A criminal defense attorney, Dan Larkin would surely be an expert in outfoxing the police. But no evidence is found linking him to a crime, and the case fades from the public's memory, a simmering, unresolved riddle. Jane's three children—Alex, Jeff, and Miranda—are left to be raised by the man who may have murdered their mother.

Two decades later, the remains of Jane Larkin are found. The investigation is awakened. The children, now grown, are forced to choose sides. With their father or against him? Guilty or innocent? And what happens if they are wrong? This is a story about family—family secrets and vengeance—that grapples with a primal question: When does loyalty reach its limit?